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HIGH LIGHTS



Windsor Lane - April - 1944

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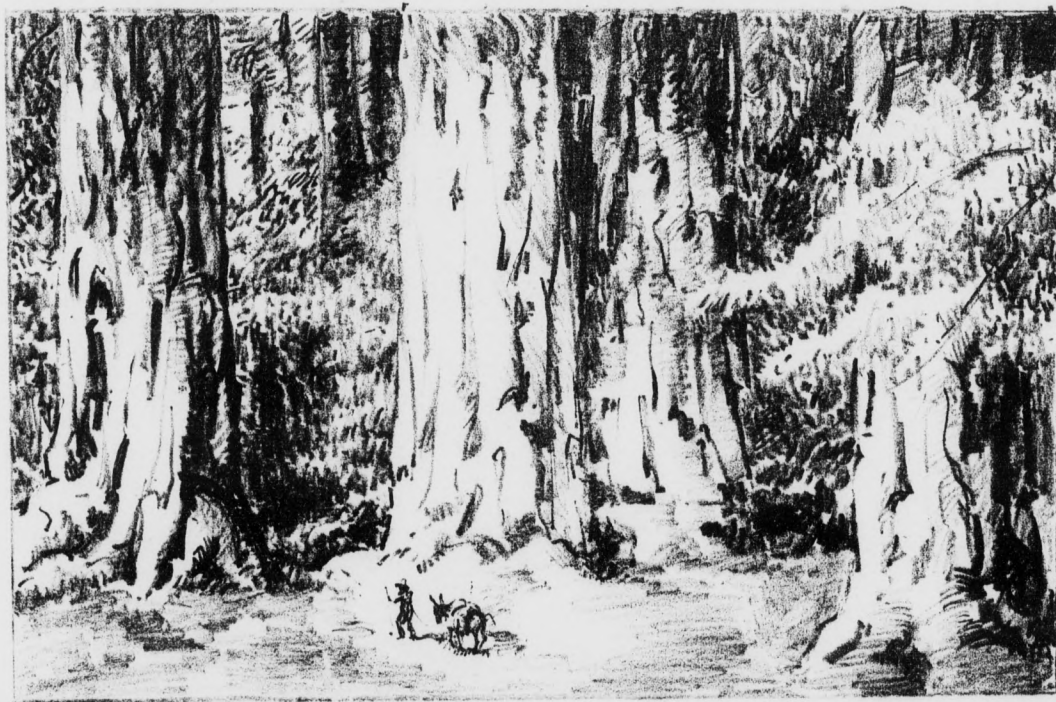
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HIGH LIGHTS

APRIL 1944

Volume 5 Number 4

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ILLUSTRATIONS

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	Dottie Burke	

HIGH LIGHTS, from the foothills; issued monthly by Sierra Madre Arts Guild at 28 Windsor Lane in Sierra Madre, California.

WARNING

Robert H. McCullagh

Knowin' nothin' of poetical form or beat,
 I've rhymed to the tune of cowhorse feet.
 To the creak of saddles
 And the bawl of herds,
 To the whisper of pines
 And the call of birds,
 I've set down my feelin's in cowpuncher words.

From punchin' the cows to punchin' the keys
 Is a change I thought could be made with ease;
 But a brand-writin' critter with all its traps,
 Is worse than the one I rode with chaps.

I strike at the letters and fondly hope
 My rhyme will move at a gentle lope;
 But my brand-writin' critter sure is ... well,
 The doggoned thing just simply can't spell.

I write and erase till the page is all blurs,
 As though I had used my quirt and my spurs.
 I get so darned mad my hatband gets hot,
 And my mind is all snarled and tied in a knot.

So I fork the old horse and coil up my rope,
 And ride all outdoors where my brain'll have scope;
 But I know I'll go back to that key-punchin' game,
 For cow-punchin' now is entirely too tame.

(Rhymes of a Rimrock Rannie)

NEW FACES

Mr. and Mrs. William Bradford Green, 87 E. Laurel St., have recently come to Sierra Madre, welcome new members of the little art colony here.

Mr. Green is a painter from Hartford, Conn., whose work is on exhibition in several galleries in New England and in other places in the east. He works in Gloucester, Mass., during the summers, and hopes hereafter to spend the winters in California. So there is a likelihood of his work becoming better known in this locality.

BUZZARDS

Far overhead in the glowing sunshine, on his outstretched, motionless wings, the brown tireless buzzard traces, hour by hour, circle after questing circle against the deep blue background of the sky. Patiently, keenly on the watch, alive to every scent and sound, he searches the valley into the distance, into the rimming hills. There is something that is hidden there that he senses, something that he will seek until it is found. Give him but a scent or a glimpse of it and he is off.

The valley is teeming with many things that are good: ripening grain fields, orchards and gardens divide the land; sleek cattle feed through the pastures and quiet sheep browse the curving hills; while, in and out through the thickets, roam innumerable the wild creatures of the brush. But it is none of these that he wants; for here, in the midst of life, it is not the living he seeks, but the dead.

Abroad and about in the dusky shadows, out of sight but never out of sound, the untiring collector of odorous news endlessly makes his rounds, circle on probing circle over the background of good reputation and of high esteem. Doggedly, forever on the alert, with one ear to the ground and the other to the winds, he searches the vale of character into the dimming years and into the buried past. There is something that is hidden there that he senses, something that he will seek until it is found. Give him but a clue or a rumor, however slight, and he is off.

This valley, too, is crowded with many excellent things: worthwhile accomplishments, charitable actions and the unselfish devotions of those about us are everywhere to be praised; self-sacrifice in our neighbors so often is to be commended and their courage and kindness so many times await our recognition; while, in the meanest person that lives, there are so many virtues to be pointed out that it is a marvel, and a constant marvel, how we can ever find time to see his faults. It is nothing of these, however, that the scandalmonger seeks; for here, in the midst of this treasure, it is not the jeweled raiment of the living that he drags into the light, but the vestments and the skeletons of the dead.

L.B.W.

HORACE

the guild mouse

ower hole fambily except the mrs have gone holly-wood or sumthing. i cum home after spendin a few ours sayin farewells to lem. lem had a few sumthing that he had bin savin for a rainy day. well i looks out the window and its rainin so we had a sample. after a while lem looks out the window and beleaf or not its still rainin so we had another sample. i dont know why but its bin rainin a whole lot of lately. i looks out the window and its still rainin so we had us another sample. then i sez farewell to lem and he up and sez farewell to me. so i sez farewell and lem looks out the window and its still rainin so we had us another sample and then i sez farewell to lem and he ups and sez farewell to me all over agin.

lem wuz afraid i cudint make it home - i dont just know why lessen it wuz becoz he thot i wuznt too well fortified with samples and mite go the rong direcshun - so he walked up with me and i wuz afraid he cudnt make it down to his place agin - i dont know why lessen i thot he wuznt too well fortified with the samples and mite not go in the rite direcshun - so i went back with him and he cum back with me and so forth and so on until we were both that tired that we parted in the middle and i went home to his house and he went home to mine.

next morning in the middle of the afternoon when i oriented myself and cum marchin in with a mary mairzy doats and a dozy doats the mrs met me with a shut your mouth and dont be acumin in hear with your flippery at all ours and cant you see as how we are all buzy afixin up of ourselves she sez, and dont give me none of your lip. yeah i sez what is its acookin. your lip looks like a mud pie gone rong and whats that gory stuff the girls has got onto there toz and fingernales cud it be that there has bin a murder hear and abouts. for your edivikashun she sez in kase you dont no it we are movin down to uptown with the eeleet and we r goin to look fit if its the last fit we have and i hopes as how you will fix yourself up a bit fit 2 as your whiskers aint bin cut since your grand uncles funeral and your ibroz look like a thached roof. its my pan i sez so leve me pan it my own self. u air agoin to imbarriass your fambily she sez if u kan but not if i kan help it so pass me that there rooj and lip stick and make urself skarce as we air agoin up to downtown in a hollywood bust in stile.

i didnt say nothin more but i got to thinkin as how maybe mairzy doats wuz rite and evryone is gone dozy or doty or both wudint you?

GUILD MEETINGS

Alice A. Floyd

William J. Trevorror is to speak on the subject, "Inscriptions and Verse Around the World," at the next meeting of the Guild, to be held on Friday evening, April 14, at the new location, 28 Windsor Lane, Sierra Madre. Mr. Trevorror has long nursed the hobby of collecting odd, humorous inscriptions and verses from tombstones and monuments in his wide travels about the world; it is upon these he will speak, promising an hour packed with fun.

In 1894, Mr. Trevorror joined the Navy where he remained for 18 years, 11 of those years spent in the Far East and in Samoa. He was chief machinist aboard Admiral Dewey's flagship, the Olympia. After retiring from the Navy he became a teacher of civil engineering at Polytechnic High School in Los Angeles. Born in northern California, he is a native son; by descent, however, he is Welsh, and has long been interested in matters pertaining to the Welsh people. In 1937, he went to Wales and there, while attending an eisteddfod held within the ancient stone circle of Penzance, was honored with initiation into the Cambrian brotherhood as a bard of Cornwall.

Please note the change of meeting place and the change of date from the customary first Friday.

* * * * *

Members and friends of the Guild enjoyed a special treat at the March meeting held at "The Vine," in the readings by the Arcadia postman-poet, Matthew Biller. He was introduced by Harlan Ware as "one refreshing to meet, with the real American spirit that is lacking today in so many well-known writers who have diverted their pens to political channels and are not always democratically American;" and was characterized by Lee Shippey as "a man of heroic courage, to withstand the return of so many manuscripts and yet retain faith and confidence in himself."

Matthew Biller looks "homespun," and reflects in outer simplicity of manner and speech the inner candor of his soul. Developing his sympathies and understanding obviously by "doing," he has long found this his way, too, of learning how to adapt the pigments of life to his verbal portraits.

"I have read the Bible more than any other book," he said; "before I was fourteen, I had read it through five

times, so that much of the beauty and rhythm of its language unconsciously remains in my mind." Indeed, this was indicated in the inspirational verses he read, based on an excerpt from "The Song of Solomon." "The lines between good prose and good poetry are so thin," he went on, "that one can hardly see which is which. We shall see the day when the good writers will all be poets and the good poets will all be prose writers. This happy tendency is familiar among several well-known writers today."

The poet, however, lamented the average man's neglect of the "inner self" in the rush of the daily routine. "Surely," he said, "the real aim of education is to teach us how to live, after we have made our living." His timely message might well be found in his words: -

"Mighty nation of America, in your cities standing splendid in the sun, above the spires, I see the ghosts of Time's heroes treading. Amid the clamor of life, they are pleading for more freedom - for the soul of man!"

Mr. Biller's verses are being recognized by well-known magazines; but his preferred metier is the American ballad, of which he admits he has written a "basketful." From his ballad readings, he held his audience with narratives from Comstock Lode history, including "Billy Tate," "Sugar-foot Jack," "Sam Brown" and "Fiddler Joe."

APPRECIATION

Dear Mr. Wynne:

May I express my appreciation for the splendid review of my book, "The Wake of the Prairie Schooner," in your February number. It is one of the best that has appeared, and I feel greatly flattered at its length and the genuine feeling shown in every paragraph.

Your magazine is delightful, and I have framed the cover drawing to preserve it.

Once again my thanks to you. Very sincerely,

Irene D. Paden.

NEW BRITAIN INTERLUDE

Bernard Wynne

Lately on the move again and am no longer in New Guinea. There is still a lot of action going on around us. We are within sight of the front lines. I surely have to hand it to the Marines. Our outfit came in here right behind them, which is unusual. They've done a wonderful job, and are the only thing between us and the Japs. They really deserve the credit. Everything is quiet here just now. Only occasionally we hear firing and see the artillery shelling the Japs back in the hills, but nothing else. Evidently the Japs don't have any artillery of their own, for they never answer. The Air Corps does a fine job, too. During the day it's as quiet and peaceful here as it was at home, but at night the Jap bombers come.

When I first arrived here it was the most desolate place I've ever seen - rain all the time, mud two and three feet deep, and practically every tree was smashed and broken from the bombs and shell fire. Large areas that had once been thick with trees were nothing but shredded stumps and debris, the foliage almost completely gone. The sea was rough and grey with streaks of white where the surf beat upon the reefs, and all along the beach was the smell of decaying bodies. By the time I arrived most of the dead Japs had been removed. It's a disgusting sight even if they are the enemy. I saw a few bodies along the beach yesterday. They were being washed by the waves and didn't smell as bad as they might have, but it was disgusting just the same. The odor is a sort of sickening sweet smell, and once you get a good whiff of it you begin to imagine it everywhere. Today I ran across a Jap's foot protruding from a pile of dirt. The Japs must have been through hell here when we were shelling, bombing and strafing. There are lots of places here that look like the pictures of "No Man's Land" that we've seen - bomb craters big enough to hold a house, dug-outs, barbed wire, trees blown apart and bodies lying in very unnatural positions. The hills are pockmarked with shell holes and with bomb craters, dotted with the smashed-in concrete circles of Jap pill-boxes. Out of them comes the same sweetish sickening smell of the dead.

I had quite a day today. I was scheduled to go on the night guard so had the day free. I hitchhiked down the beach as far as the road went and then headed off for a hill a couple of miles away. There was quite a battle there a few weeks ago. It was a climb almost straight up the side and through jungle. There are a lot of old Jap dug-outs and emplacements on the ridge. Not many souvenirs left. I can

well understand what they mean when they say that this is the most difficult terrain in the world for fighting. The view of ocean and surrounding hills was magnificent from the top. As I passed along the beach, it seemed like a different place - good roads, all the mess and debris cleaned up now and everything improving steadily. I even went in for a swim. The shore is covered with rocks worn smooth from the constant rolling of the surf, but a little way out the bottom is smooth and hard with a very gentle slope, a lot like that of the Gulf of Mexico.

The other day I saw my first live Jap, a prisoner. A Marine patrol came in with two of them. They brought them in on stretchers and they looked pretty sick. One was well enough to be able to smoke a cigarette, but the other was in very bad shape. He died last night. The Marines said they found them sick with a lot more dead, which looks as if we may have all their supplies cut off. They may be starving or just sick and lacking medical care. The other one is still O.K. They say that he is American born and a graduate of Ohio State. According to his story, he was visiting in Japan before the war and was caught in the army there. Says he is thoroughly disgusted with the whole thing and that the rest are too. We are taking more prisoners now than before. When they find out that they are not going to die, they become quite talkative. A prisoner was taken a while back who is six feet four inches tall and weighs well over two hundred pounds.

I had an odd experience a while ago. When I was on detail, I saw a truck nearby with three Japs in it. They were in our uniform and are working in intelligence as interpreters, and were here to interview the prisoners. The smallest one looked very familiar, so I went over and talked to him. Then I recognized him as a kid I'd known over at P.J.C. I forget his name. He knew all the people in Sierra Madre and where we live. It is funny that after over a year in the Army, the first familiar face was that of a Jap.

Speaking of souvenirs, some of the boys have gotten Jap money and postcards. I got a package of Jap cigarettes from one of the medics. I tried a few puffs. They have a sickening flavor and the whole package smells the same. I had a Jap skull, but I put it out in the sun to dry and someone stole it. They say that when the Marines shoot a Jap sniper out of a tree, he doesn't hit the ground before he is stripped of everything.

The other night I saw a very beautiful sight. All the nearby anti-aircraft guns sent up a barrage of tracer

shells which covered the sky. They go up just like Roman candles and are a brilliant red. I have seen some of the famous bombers you've probably heard of which have made so many missions. I guess the Jap pilots are pretty green now. In any event, they can't stand up to our boys.

I have a half interest in a new fox hole now. Had to get busy on it the other night. After working evenings on the one we had, a large tractor came by and ran over it a few times. Our new one is right alongside of our tent and we stretched one flap of the tent over it so it will be waterproof. Tonight we've been working a lot on fixing up our tent and cleaning away the grass around it. We have to be very careful of the grass since the "scrub typhus tick" lives in it. We were issued jungle boots today. They are very nice, a combination shoe and legging. It is a pleasure to wear them after G.I. shoes. They are a good protection against the typhus tick. There are strange diseases here. In addition to the typhus tick fever, malaria, etc., there has been quite an epidemic of rashes. It is a fungus infection, picked up from practically everything. One can get it from the jungle foliage or from bathing in the stream. So far, I've escaped, but I'm afraid I have a bit of it now. Aside from treatment which isn't very effective, the best cure is to stop bathing and let it dry up. It seems a bit drastic but it works. It is caused by the constant rains and dampness.

I guess it rains here more than in any other place in the world. I've never seen so much rain in all my life. I thought that New Guinea was bad, but this place is really something. It is stormy here most of the time, and it is almost impossible to keep dry. (I just had to dive into my hammock as a quick shower came up.) We have no lights here, of course; so I have to do all my writing between supper and dark, out of doors. It's such a mess trying to write while sitting on the ground with wind and rain. Of course, the rain helps to keep the Jap bombers away at night, which is something. It seems to rain on more or less of a schedule, especially at night or in the morning when we get up. You can imagine how we resent stepping out into the mud to find our shoes. What a rainstorm we had today! It was so heavy that it looked just like a fog. The continual dampness is very hard on things. The little pictures in the bracelet are fading out slowly. All photographs seem to fade over here.

Yesterday was the first rainless day I've seen yet since coming here. Even the clouds on the mountains lifted at times. The clouds usually lie over the mountains, some-

times just along the middle with the peaks jutting above. There is usually a vapor settling in the valleys and hollows looking very much like steam. We had a bit of sunshine for the first time in many days. The clouds are quite beautiful when the sun shines through; but the heat of the sun is very intense, even through the clouds. When the sun is out, the sky is very blue. If it isn't raining, I sometimes see a bit of the color; but the mountains obstruct the view anyway. Last evening the sky was very nice over the mountains. There were black rain clouds with long vertical streaks below them, and the sun was striking the clouds behind. The sky ran from purple down to blue with reddish clouds low on the horizon. There were several large trees silhouetted in black against the sky. The stars came out, the belt of Orion very high in the heavens. All the cloud formations here make good water color subjects. Sometimes we have some very beautiful sky effects here just after the sun goes down, the sky very blue and filled with large billowing clouds. There are often very luminous blues and grey-blues in the clouds in the east just at twilight. We have clouds every day just like the ones at home after a rain. The ocean has always looked so grey and miserable, but the other day was different - a lovely deep blue. This place would be more beautiful than New Guinea if only the weather were the same.

This country is really quite different from New Guinea. There is lots more open country, not so much jungle. The top soil here is the blackest I've ever seen, and of course it makes a good mud. Most of the roads are about a foot thick with it. There is a tall grass growing here that looks a great deal like Pampas grass. It has the same kind of tall plume. The grass grows very high, even over a man's head. We have a small volcano here. It is smoking away quite merrily this evening, and is still visible in spite of the evening clouds over the mountains. The insects are like those of New Guinea. The ants here are just about as bothersome, but they live in the jungle mostly. They like to make homes in dead trees, and often build them up on the sides of tree trunks, somewhat like a hornet's nest.

One thing I'm learning in the Army is to get along on the minimum. I never could have gotten along on so few clothes before. One takes the simple conveniences too much for granted. I haven't shaved since my arrival. I guess I'll have to start pretty soon, though, as public opinion is against me. My beard is getting quite long, but it's so moth-eaten that people say I look like a hobo. Some character from another company whom I don't know always stops me and asks what kind of blades I use. I did a bit of my

washing the other night. We have a small stream about 25 feet wide which runs right by the camp. It comes from the mountains behind us and is quite clean. We used to bathe in it every night until the fungus infection came along. It is a fine place in which to wash clothes. The ocean method of washing clothes that I used in New Guinea was very successful, but fresh water is much better. I am now using a very ancient method of washing clothes, which is to beat them against a rock. I believe that method has been in use in India for centuries. In any event, it seems to be effective enough.

I am doing quite a business now making portraits of the boys on the side. Sid Weinstein is acting as my manager, and I get two pounds for a portrait. I just finished a sketch of one of the boys. He had raised quite a good sized beard and wanted a picture before he shaved it off. The picture turned out very well. I have also made some quick sketches of the cloud formations that have turned out well. We were all sitting around talking about painting and the photography of nocturnal subjects, discussing music and various of our favorite composers. About the only music (if you can call it that) that I've heard since entering this Army has been the silly hillbilly tunes that the "goons" sing. Every once in a while one of these weird creatures shuffles by moaning something that passes for a song. They all fancy themselves fine singers, too. I don't doubt but that some of these tunes have been hidden away in the hills of Kentucky for the past three hundred years. We had quite a feast the other night. Sid Weinstein got a couple of salami, pickles, mustard, etc., in the mail; so all the Jewish boys gathered in our tent, and I crashed the gate, so to speak. It was all gone in no time. Poor Sid! A few nights back, "Washing-machine Charlie" came over and dropped a few eggs. We had a small fire and Sid was burned. I went down to the hospital to see him tonight. He's getting along well and says he hopes to be back soon. It's very quiet around the tent without him.

I've been thinking a lot lately about the time I have spent in the Army. When I think of home, it seems just the way I left it just after Christmas of a year ago. I feel as though my life and everything stopped when I left. It is so hard to believe I've been gone so long. It's more as if a prolonged night had descended on me and I were now groping in the dark waiting for the day to come, and then I would find myself at home again. That dark foggy morning you left me at the gate of Fort MacArthur seems to sort of symbolize my life in the Army - always leaving the familiar things and moving out into the darkness and the unknown.

SHADOW OF NIGHT by August Derleth. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 354 pp. \$2.50

In "Shadow of Night," a story of American pioneers in Wisconsin, August Derleth adds another fine, beautiful novel to his "Sac Prairie Saga."

This is the tale of Odo Gebhardt, a sensitive man, who, as a soldier in the German civil wars of the 1840's, killed a fellow countryman and then emigrated to far-off America in an effort to escape a haunting remorse that he could never escape: "It was my hand, but not my will." This is the tale of Hasso, the cripple, a brother of the slain, who tracked the slayer to the little town of Sac Prairie upon the frontiers of Wisconsin, and there, little by little, saw his plan of vengeance changed to a design of deep friendship and his enduring hate made enduring love, a very strange metamorphosis in which Fr. Inama, the Mellmans, the Pierneaus and other friends and neighbors had a hand: "Hated is a kind of disease, like the shadow of night coming across the sun."

This book is one, not merely entertaining for the adult reader, but one well worth while the reading and the study of the young. It is a book to be recommended to those in their teens.

In addition to the human interest so fascinating and so masterfully delineated, the book will hold and delight the reader with its sheer beauty alone. He will soon realize that August Derleth is a poet as well as a novelist. This prose has a continuous yet unobtrusive musical rhythm; passage after passage, page after page, is a prose poem, where the words are chosen and arranged not only for sense but for sound. It is a book wherein the background abounds with accurate nature notes, wherein the descriptions are filled not merely with precise colors and sounds, but, what is rarely done, with odors.

Between the twilight and the moonrise in the little cemetery of Sac Prairie, where the aged caretaker comes upon their graves, they two who were once mortal enemies now lie quietly side by side. The shadow of night should fall upon them there, since the sun has set, but long ago this shadow came upon them in the noonday of their lives and was turned a golden dawn.

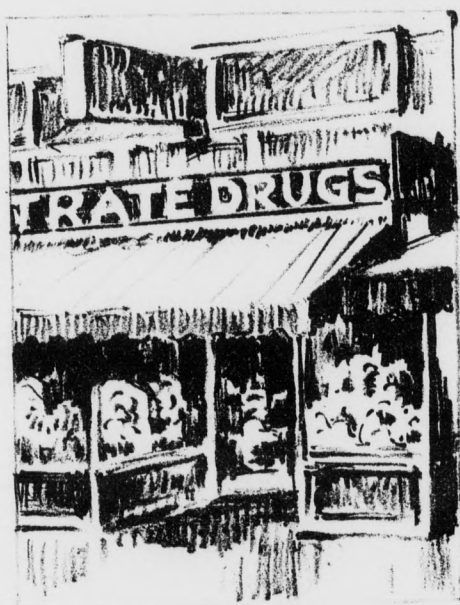
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